

ARTICLE APPEARED

ON PAGE A-9

WASHINGTON TIMES

31 August 1984

Random House commissions book on KAL incident

By Tom Nugent
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Random House, the New York publishing house, has confirmed that "sometime next year" it will publish a book by Seymour Hersh on the downing of Korean Air Lines Flight 007.

Mr. Hersh, whose books on former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and the My Lai "massa-

cre" in the Vietnam war set off hot debates, received a \$400,000 advance, according to publishing industry sources.

While confirming that Mr. Hersh had signed a contract, a Random House spokesman refused to talk about the size of the advance payment. "That's a closely guarded secret around here. Most of the people at Random House don't even know the figure."

Along with Random House, several magazines and newspapers in the United States and abroad have speculated about the circumstances surrounding the downing of Flight 007 last Sept. 1, as it crossed the Soviet Union's Sakhalin Island near the Sea of Japan.

Various "conspiracy" theories have been advanced, most centering on the Soviet contention that the airliner was involved in a spying or

surveillance operation in cooperation with the United States.

One of these theories postulates that the Korean 747 deliberately strayed into Soviet airspace to "trigger" military radars which then could be detected and analyzed by U.S. intelligence-gathering units in the area.

A variation of this theory contends that the plane may genuinely have been off-course, but that

U.S. monitoring stations in the area were aware of it and used the incident as a "target of opportunity" to see how the Soviets would respond.

U.S. officials agree that many questions remain unanswered but dismiss as unfounded speculation — the speculators have "left no coincidence unturned" — the theory that the American military either directly or indirectly contributed to the tragedy by remaining

silent while it unfolded.

Pentagon and intelligence officials say the primary cause of the tragedy — the cold-blooded decision to shoot down an unarmed commercial jetliner in mid-flight — has been ignored in this speculation as Western reporters seek to fix at least part of the blame on the United States.

The state-controlled Soviet news media, they argue, have in recent weeks been quoting frequently from such articles as the Russians step up a propaganda campaign.